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24 March 1960

CONTRIBUTIONS TO POWER POSITIONS PROJECT

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PARTICIPATING:



This meeting was held for the purpose of discussing geographic elements of national power and to select those which were significant in helping to assess relative "Free World" vs. Sino-Soviet Bloc power positions.

A list of eleven elements considered to be basic and geographic was presented as a discussion target. Many of the items were "standard" but after prolonged discussion it was decided that elements such as climate, natural resources and their development, population, transportation and communication, stages of cultural, economic, and technological development were geographic only in so far as any space-location aspects of them were concerned. These elements in so far as their power relationships were concerned could be best handled by specialists in those fields, even though the geographer does recognize their significance and inter-relationships. A few of the elements on the list were determined to be truly geographic and as such could legitimately be handled by the GRA. Non-nuclear attack is not foreseen at this time on either the "Free World" or the Sino-Soviet Bloc.

The elements that remained as being appropriate for our evaluation were arranged in two groups:

1. Location, size, shape and boundaries

*essentially* Under this caption the effects of location, size and shape, which all have space-location features, as well as the geographic nature, and implication, of the natural boundaries will be discussed.

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2. Disparities in Knowledge of the Physical Environment

In so far as geographers do deal with the over all physical environment, and as we know that man's development and actions are significantly influenced by the extent of his knowledge and control of it, we feel that an assessment of the disparities in the respective knowledge of the physical environment possessed by each power group is essential to an evaluation of their relative power positions. Two subdivisions are made under this heading:

a. Relative degree of self-knowledge of the physical environments of the U.S.A., ("Free World") and the U.S.S.R.(Sino-Sov Bloc).

b. Relative degree of knowledge by each group of the physical environment of the rest of the world including each other.

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The first group will be written by [REDACTED] after a briefing by Chief, D/GG. The second group will be written up by Chief, D/GG/X who was also a participant in these discussions. In addition an introductory statement is to be prepared by Chief/G. The contribution is to be prepared for review by 14 April 1960.

22

The introductory statement is to explain the restriction to a rather limited list of geographic factors rather than the presentation of an inventory of what are nominally called geographic factors in such an exercise. It will also draw attention to the significance of the latter section of the paper dealing with disparities in knowledge of the physical environment between the two power blocs.

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